



# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES TREASURER AND TAX COLLECTOR

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437 KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012




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**TO:** Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

**FROM:** **Mark J. Saladino**  
**Treasurer and Tax Collector** 

**SUBJECT:** AGENDA ITEM #13- MEETING OF NOVEMBER 25, 2003  
(PROPERTY TAX COLLECTION IN ASSESSOR DISTRICT  
OFFICES)

On November 25, 2003, your Board requested a report from this office and the Office of the Assessor, with a plan to place a representative from this office in each District Office of the Assessor to collect property tax payments in December and April. In addition to the Assessor's headquarters office in the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, there are four District Offices located in Sylmar (3), Signal Hill (4), Culver City (2), and South El Monte (1).

Over the past several years we have studied the feasibility of collecting property tax payments in the Assessor's District Offices in December and April, and such a program has already been established at the Assessor's office in Lancaster (5). Despite the success of the Lancaster program, it cannot be duplicated in other locations without additional staff. Staffing additional locations with existing employees would leave the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration with insufficient cashiers to handle the peak tax collection periods.

In order to provide tax collection services at the four District Offices, several issues must be considered, including the following:

- The County Fiscal Manual requires that tax payments, like all collections, be collected and reconciled in double custody;

- Security measures such as an isolated (secured) cashiering window with lockable safe and drawer, and daily armored car pick-up service are mandatory;
- Installation of equipment and software for an automated cashiering terminal with posting and receipting capability;
- Installation of equipment and software for electronic access to the County's Secured Property Tax System (STR) for necessary research;
- Backup staffing for vacations, leaves of absence, etc.

It should also be noted that our tax collection activities are more complicated than simply receiving secured roll payments twice a year. In addition to annual Secured Property taxes, the Treasurer and Tax Collector also bills and collects supplemental taxes (resulting from the transfer of property) and Unsecured Property taxes throughout the year.

Overall, the TTC prints and mails over 3 million annual, supplemental and unsecured property tax bills each year. Delinquency Notices, Notices of Auction, Notices of Enforcement and Notices of Lien are also mailed to approximately 1 million taxpayers annually. It is our experience that many taxpayers who visit our existing cashiering windows also have questions relating to their bills and notices. Because these questions are of varying complexity, I would strongly recommend placing at least one Tax Service Specialist in each location to assist taxpayers and complement the cashiering function. It would be less confusing to the public while reducing taxpayer frustration and promoting one-stop service.

Your Board's action contemplates that our operations in Assessor offices would be conducted seasonally (only during the months in which property taxes are due). However, we have concluded that the proposed operations cannot be conducted with temporary or seasonal staff. Property tax field operations require individuals who are cross-trained in cashiering and tax service, and in light of the complexity described above it is impractical (if not impossible) to recruit and train qualified staff to work for only four to six weeks per year. Moreover, the use of temporary workers would be inconsistent with established security protocols, in terms of the appropriate levels of both supervision and internal controls.

As noted above, existing staff is insufficient to deploy to Assessor District Offices during peak collection periods without jeopardizing services at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration. Additional permanent staffing would clearly be necessary, but would enable us to establish full-service tax collection operations year-round in all four District Offices. This would include collection of annual, supplemental and unsecured property taxes. Business license and general debt

collection services would continue to be provided at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration.

We estimate that an annual appropriation of \$729,000 would be required to fund permanent staff, required supervision, and related services and supplies at the four Assessor District Offices, as outlined in the attachment. In addition, we estimate that a one-time appropriation of \$45,000 would be required to construct security modifications (secured cashiering windows, safe, etc.) and to purchase necessary equipment. Costs associated with other office modifications that would be required to accommodate our employees in the District Offices will be provided by the Assessor.

#### Attachment

c: Executive Officer-Clerk of the Board  
Assessor

Attachment

Treasurer and Tax Collector  
Staffing and Funding Requirements  
Assessor District Offices

Salaries and Employee Benefits:

8 ea. Intermediate Cashier	\$ 259,000
4 ea. Tax Services Specialist	154,000
1 ea. Tax Services Supervisor I	43,000
Employee Benefits	<u>183,000</u>
Total Salaries and Employee Benefits	\$ 639,000
Services and Supplies	<u>90,000</u>
<b>TOTAL FUNDING REQUIREMENTS (ANNUAL)</b>	<b>\$ 729,000</b>
Office Modifications (one time)	\$ 45,000
<b>FIRST YEAR REQUIRED APPROPRIATION</b>	<b><u>\$ 774,000</u></b>